DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 110 902 CG 010 029

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TITLE Air Force Academy Candidate Counseling in the Seventies. Air Command and Staff College Research Study, Report Number 2650-74.
INSTITUTION Air Command and Staff Coll., Maxwell AFB, Ala.
REPORT NO R-2650-74
PUB DATE May 74
NOTE 96p.; For related document, see CG 010 030

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$4.43 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Admission Criteria; Armed Forces; *Counseling Programs; Military Air Facilities; *Military Personnel; Officer Personnel; *Recruitment; Research Projects; *Selection
IDENTIFIERS *Air Force Academy

ABSTRACT

The number of qualified candidates from which the United States Air Force Academy selects its new cadets each year has decreased to the point where, in the future, every qualified candidate may have to be selected. In addition, the number of cadets dropping out of the Academy program is at an all time high. This study considers the entire candidate counseling program as it now stands and compares it with proven techniques of professional counseling and recruiting. It is concluded that the present candidate counseling program needs major revision. Several specific recommendations are made which could aid the counseling program in meeting its objectives in the future. (Author)

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REPORT NO. 2650-74

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AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR FORCE ACADEMY CANDIDATE COUNSELING IN THE SEVENTIES

By

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Major, USAF, 1939-

A RESEARCH STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

May 1974

AIR UNIVERSITY

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

ABSTRACT

The number of qualified candidates from which the United States Air Force Academy selects its new cadets each year has decreased to the point where, in the future, every qualified candidate may have to be selected. In addition, the number of cadets dropping out of the Academy program is at an all time high. This study considers the entire candidate counseling program as it now stands and compares it with proven techniques of professional counseling and recruiting. It is concluded that the present candidate counseling program needs major revision. Several specific recommendations are made which could aid the counseling program in meeting its objectives in the future.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> A most important ingredient influencing the Academy's ability to graduate a top quality "product"--the new second lieutenant--is the "raw material" with which it starts. It is important to the Academy, to the Air Force, and to the Nation that the service academies continue to attract their share of the best, the most talented, and the most dedicated of the Nation's young men,[1] (Lt. General Thomas S. Moorman)

Introduction

The mission of the United States Air Force Academy is to graduate young men who will provide the U. S. Air Force with a framework of dedicated and capable career officers about which a durable and productive structure may be built. As is stated in the United States Air Force Academy 1973-1974 Catalog:

> The mission of the Air Force Academy makes the school different from a civilian college or university. . . . Since cadets are preparing for a career of service to their country, the Academy must exercise discipline and control to insure that they evolve into enlightened officers with strong moral character, physical fitness, and leadership ability, and professional skills.[2]

It should be evident from these mission descriptions that the Academy requires a special kind of youth who has the motivation to succeed in an environment much different from that of a civilian university.

Today, congressional leaders are focusing attention on the motivation aspect of the Air Force Academy cadet and cadet candidate. A report from the 16th of January 1974 issue of the Air Force Times states that "Congress has expressed an interest in the attrition problem and GAO [General Accounting Office] is conducting an investigation into causes of heavy cadet losses."[3] In the same report, it is stated that the Academy's Board of Visitors, tasked with making an annual report to the President on Academy activities, lays a large portion of the blame for cadet losses on the cadet selection process. They feel that candidates are being accepted who are not sufficiently motivated to endure the difficult training programs.

While recognizing that it is desirable to obtain highly motivated candidates, one must also recognize that the Academy must appoint enough candidates to maintain the required number of cadets in the Wing. A report from the Director of Admissions at the Academy shows that in 1973 there were only 1,889 qualified cadet candidates. 1,870 appointments were offered to provide 1,461 new cadets, the number needed to maintain Cadet Wing size.[4] This means that the Academy came within nineteen individuals of offering every qualified candidate, regardless of motivation, an appointment to the Air Force Academy. It is the purpose of this paper to consider methods whereby this dilemma may be avoided in the future.

Statement of the Problem

The Air Force Academy candidate counseling process must be improved so as to provide a pool of quality candidates which is large enough to allow some latitude for qualitative selection whereby the required number of the best qualified candidates may be admitted to the Academy, each of whom is personally committed to completing an Air Force Academy education.

Limitations

Motivation is the theme of this study. Ideally, a young man should be highly motivated from the day he becomes an applicant for the Air Force Academy to the day he retires from the United States Air Force. Since that is an immense span of time, this study is limited to that span of time prior to the candidate's entry into the Air Force Academy as a cadet and deals with his relationship with the Academy representative: the candidate counselor.

The study is also limited to a consideration of the past, present, and future roles of the Air Force Academy candidate counselor in his work with high schools and high school students. Little mention is made of college students, ROTC and Junior ROTC programs, CAP, and Prep School programs, although these programs may well have a growing impact on the Air Force Academy candidate of the future.

Assumptions

It is assumed that it is the task of the Academy candidate counselor to insure that the candidate has developed the motivation and is committed to complete an Air Force Academy education. The candidate counselor cannot be expected to judge the level of career commitment of a 17 year old, but he may be fairly accurate in judging educational commitment. Once the candidate becomes a cadet, it is then the task of the institution to increase the cadet's motivation and to refine his commitment so that he will not only graduate from the Academy but will graduate with the motivation to complete a successful Air Force career.

A second assumption must be that the efforts of a candidate counselor will not be thwarted by the congressional nomination process. The coordination between the Director of Admissions and the congressional staffs should assure that the most qualified applicants will be nominated and will, therefore, become candidates.

A third assumption concerns the medical qualification of an applicant. Since certain medical standards are essential to the mission of the Air Force, it is assumed that minimum Air Force Academy medical standards are fixed and need not be considered as an avenue for increasing the number of qualified candidates.

Finally, it is assumed that the possible inclusion of women in the Cadet Wing will neither appreciably change the level of motivation among Academy applicants nor will it appreciably

change the number of applicants.

Definitions

Air Force Academy Candidate Counselor: In terms of this paper, any of the Academy representatives who are designated to contact and to counsel Air Force Academy candidates are candidate counselors. These include such persons as the Academy liaison officer, the intercollegiate coach, the Air Force Academy graduate working through the Association of Graduates, and the newest of the counselors, the regular Air Force Base Commander and his staff under the project "Top Talk".

"Top Talk": An effort by the Academy to increase the awareness of the fully qualified candidate as to the challenges before him. To quote from the Association of Graduates Magazine dated December 1973, "Top Talk" is the following:

> Simply stated, "Top Talk" will bring together selected regular officers at bases around the country and fully qualified cadet candidates to help insure that the latters' expectations of the Academy and the Air Force are accurate. This interview with the candidate will provide the Academy with additional information regarding his motivation toward being a cadet and pursuing an Air Force Career.5

Qualifications of the Author

The author is well qualified to investigate this problem. He was graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1961 and has been actively involved in its programs since that time. He has represented the

Air Force and the Academy at civic clubs, parents associations, etc. He participated in the Air Force Academy Liaison Officer program as an advisor in St. Louis, Missouri, during the years 1969-1970. In this capacity he became well acquainted with the Liaison Officer program and with the problems of liaison officers and cadet candidates. As a member of the Air Force Academy staff from 1970 to 1973, he was an active participant in many panels and committees dealing with cadets and candidates such as the candidate selection panels, the academic class committees, and Commandant's review boards. He was a Department of Athletics recruiter, a candidate counselor, and in that capacity assisted nearly 75 young men in attaining Academy appointments.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to determine methods whereby the Air Force Academy candidate counseling process may more effectively produce candidates who are both qualified and motivated to complete an Air Force Academy education. The principle objectives are to (1) analyze the present candidate counseling system to determine why today's candidates are not sufficiently motivated to complete an Academy education, (2) to investigate alternatives whereby motivation may be achieved, and (3) to propose a program which may offer an effective alternative to the present program.

To achieve these objectives the following chapter will examine

and explain the standards for cadet qualification. Chapter three will discuss the candidate counseling program as it exists today and indicate areas of weakness while suggesting possible improvements. Chapter four discusses the problems of counseling in today's environment and describes the attributes and techniques necessary for effective counseling. Chapter five deals with the problem of recruiting and the techniques which make the practice palatable and useful. Chapter six condenses the practices of counseling and recruiting into a useable whole and suggests a training program which could be developed to increase the ability of the candidate counselor in providing the Academy with qualified and motivated candidates. Chapter seven will summarize the findings and review the recommendations from the body of the report.

In summary, this study seeks to determine reasons for cadet and candidate attrition due to low motivation. It analyzes possible solutions and provides recommendations as well as thoughts for consideration of a more useful selection process. To understand the process, it is necessary to understand the criteria for candidacy and the reasons for that criteria. The following chapter discusses this topic in detail.

CHAPTER II

CRITERIA FOR CADET CANDIDATE QUALIFICATION

> To achieve the ultimate quality in our graduates we must begin with the very best raw material we can assemble of our country's youth. . . . From such talent as this the Air Force Academy hopes to develop the well-rounded, whole man that the Air Force needs for its future leaders.[1] (Lt. General Thomas S. Moorman)

Introduction

To seek to produce the ultimate officer is an admirable goal, but the concept seems rather idealistic. In a time when pragmatism seems to be the standard, what kind of graduate do the citizens of the United States expect from the Air Force Academy or from any officer school? Colonel Verne Biven described these expectations to a class of pilot trainees in this way:

> Having been specially chosen by the United States to sustain the dignity and integrity of its sovereign power, an officer is expected, for as long as he may live, to maintain himself and to exert his influence so that he will be recognized as a worthy symbol of all that is best in the national character.[2]

It is to this end that the Academy program has been instituted. The honor code, the code of ethics, the academic and military curriculum are all designed to orient the student at the Academy toward the highest levels of character and capability. These are the traits which are expected of the military officer by the

citizens of the United States. Some may doubt that this is true, but this author has been offered credit when others were not, has had checks cashed when others could not, has been given the seat of honor among civilians merely because he is a commissioned officer. These citizens respect the standards attributed to the commissioned officer. If they expect those standards of character in the Air Force officer, then the Academy is obligated to appoint candidates from the very best of the Nation's youth.

In seeking to fulfill this obligation, one must be aware of the difficulties involved. In 1967 when the attrition figures were much lower than they are now and when the possibility of the all-volunteer force was conjecture, the Academy Board of Visitors made the following observations. They said:

> Members of Congress can assist in reducing attrition at the Academy by nominating only individuals who are highly qualified and motivated toward service careers. . . . The Board recommends that the Academy develop a contingency plan to procure a sufficient number of fully qualified candidates if the possible elimination of the existing Selective Service System should drastically reduce the number of applicants.[3]

Today these fears have been realized. The attrition at the Air Force Academy is at an all time high. Much of it is attributed to poor motivation on the part of the candidates. The number of qualified candidates in the summer of 1973 was only 19 more than the number required for the entering class as was pointed out in chapter one. The Academy staff is aware of these facts and is busy with many projects which may help to provide a continuing supply of high

quality candidates. However, no one has seriously considered major revisions in the selection process as was suggested by the 1967 Board of Visitors.

In considering any major revision to the selection process, it is important to understand what the eligibility requirements are and how they assure the acquisition of a quality candidate. This chapter will first describe the eligibility requirements. Then, since the primary factors which determine eligibility are academic capability, leadership potential, and motivation, each of these topics will be discussed under separate headings.

Eligibility Requirements

A look at the eligibility requirements for the Air Force Academy provides a fairly concise picture of what general qualities a youth must have to be considered for an Academy appointment. The United States Air Force Academy 1973-1974 Catalog states that in addition to being a citizen of the United States and being within the required age limits the youth must possess the following qualities:

> Character--He must be responsible, trustworthy, stable and have good moral character.
>
> Marital Status--He must never have been married. . . .
>
> Medical Standards--He must be in good physical condition.
>
> Scholastic--He must have adequate academic preparation as reflected in his school records.
>
> Potential leadership--He must have demonstrated the

Potential for leadership through participation in extracurricular activities.

Motivation--He must have a strong desire to become a cadet and an interest in pursuing a military career.[4]

These criteria seem clear enough on the surface, but if one studies them more closely, questions will arise. Just what is "good physical condition"? What has the Academy determined "adequate academic preparation" to be? How is motivation determined and how much is necessary to be eligible for an Academy appointment? As was mentioned in chapter one, physical and medical qualifications are determined by the demands of the Air Force mission. Academic standards, leadership potential, and motivation will be discussed in the following three sections of this chapter.

Academic Qualifications

The Office of Admissions and Registrar at the Air Force Academy uses the College Board Aptitude Testing Program and the American College Testing Program to measure an applicant's academic aptitude.[5] The student's prior high school and college record is also considered. If one were to attempt to determine his eligibility from the criteria described in the last section, he could probably determine that almost anyone with average high school grades could meet the criteria. However, the Office of

Admissions and Registrar at the Academy has set rigid standards based upon the scores obtained from the testing programs named above. A look at the achievements of an average cadet in the class which entered in July of 1973 will underline the stringent requirements for actual admittance to the Academy.

The statistics summarized here are from a report entitled The Descriptive Characteristics for the Class of 1977 which was obtained from the Office of Admissions and Registrar.[6] In addition, comparisons are made from a report in the Educational and Psychological Measurement magazine concerning Scholastic Aptitude Test scores for today's college students.[7] These reports indicate that nearly half of the last Academy class had received scholarship offers from other colleges and universities. Over 80 percent of them had graduated in the top 20 percent of their high school classes. The sum of the Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, both verbal and mathematics, was 1,235 for the average cadet. In comparison, the average college freshman from nine comparable universities scored 935. The highest average among the nine schools individually was 1,032 while the lowest was 798. From these figures and comparisons, it can be easily seen that the average cadet does represent the "very best raw material" from among the youth of the Nation, at least academically.

Many feel that these academic standards are too high and that less gifted young men would be more likely to remain in the Air

Force since there would be fewer opportunities for their talents in the civilian job market. If this were a valid assumption, then it would be evidenced by a larger number of top graduates leaving the Air Force when their commitments were up than those who graduated lower in the class order of merit. A survey of forty-one Air Force Academy graduates attending the Air Command and Staff College in 1973-1974[8] revealed that 82 percent of them were in the top twenty percent of their high school classes. Comparing that figure with the 81.6 percent from the class of 1977 in the top 20 percent of their high school class, it would appear that twelve years of service may not appreciably change the percentage of top high school graduates from class to class. As additional evidence, the Air Force Academy Alumni Secretary conducted a survey in 1968 of those who had voluntarily resigned from the Air Force.[9] Of the 330 who replied to the survey, 58 percent were in the bottom half of their class in graduation order of merit. This demonstrates that a larger number of graduate losses occurred among the lower achievers than among the high achievers. Although it is admitted that comparison is being made between graduate order of merit on the university level and graduate order of merit at the high school level, it is assumed that the scores demonstrate the native intelligence of the individual regardless of the level of education and, therefore, that the conclusions are valid.

It may be safely concluded that the level of intellect is

not a factor in attrition from the Academy or from the Air Force itself. If this is true, then the Academy's quest for those young men with the highest level of academic aptitude should continue as long as a sufficient number of candidates is available on a continuing basis.

When the number of candidates begins to drop, one alternative is to lower the academic standard while maintaining the leadership and motivation criteria at the higher level. Since academic aptitude is more precisely measured than the other necessary attributes, it could be most easily regulated to maintain the required number of qualified candidates annually. The Air Force Officer Corps has a place for many levels of academic achievement, but it has a continuing need for motivated leaders. Development of leaders is the primary mission of the Air Force Academy.

Leadership Qualification

To develop leaders, it is wise to begin by training those who have the greatest leadership potential. It is the task of the Academy selection process to identify those with the highest potential. Although the eligibility criteria referenced earlier stated that the candidate should have demonstrated leadership potential by having participated in extracurricular activities, in actuality, mere participation in extracurricular activities does not demonstrate anything about leadership potential. The leadership scores used

by the Office of Admissions are actually based on the leadership positions held by the candidate in such activities as student government, athletics, Scouting, and the like.

Regardless of the leadership positions held during high school, it is very difficult to determine who will be successful leaders. In reply to the survey cited previously, an unknown Academy graduate described this difficulty as follows:

> The problem as I see it is in trying to measure leadership/management qualities in a 17-18 year old. The qualities may be latent in some people while other people may have reached their peak.
>
> I can think back and recall some qualities I had (and hope I still have) such as integrity, patriotism, loyalty, and perseverance. These qualities are difficult to measure on a test or in an interview.[10]

This officer was prompted to make this statement because he felt that when he became a candidate for the Academy as a high school senior, he had not yet demonstrated any of those leadership traits.

If leadership qualities are difficult to measure, the real challenge to the Office of Admissions is to devise techniques which will best confront that difficulty. Regardless of the technique, common sense dictates that they can never reach the precision achieved by the academic indicators. Gathering data about an applicant's past achievements is not too difficult and has proved helpful in predicting future success, but as the attrition at the Academy increases and the pool of qualified candidates decreases, the need for more definitive selection techniques becomes apparent.

Chapters four, five, and six will study this area in detail.

The present methods of leadership measurement have been relatively successful in predicting leadership potential. However, since those measurements are general in nature, any change in the numerical minimum to provide additional candidates would tend to broaden even further the possibility of accepting a young man with poor leadership aptitude. To lower this score would increase the number of entrants who would not succeed in the military environment. This fact provides additional support to the supposition that if standards are to be lowered at all, the academic minimums must be the minimums to adjust. This is true not only because those minimums are more easily controlled, but, more importantly, because the mission of the Air Force Academy is to graduate a cadet ". . . with the knowledge and character essential to leadership. . . ."[11] There is no reference in the mission statement to his being graduated with superior academic background or specialty. He is only required to have the knowledge needed to perform as a career officer in the United States Air Force.[12] In both instances the goal is to pick from the available applicants those who have the highest quality while keeping in mind that leadership potential should take precedence if a choice must be made.

It is difficult to understand why a choice must ever be made when one realizes that there are far more than 50,000 applicants to the military academies each year. Fewer than 2,000 of them

meet the minimum qualifications.[13] If these 2,000 were all equally motivated to graduate from the Academy, the problem of deteriorating numbers of qualified candidates would not be serious. But since nearly half of those candidates drop out before their graduation date, motivation is an important variable.

Motivation Qualification

Of all the qualities heretofore mentioned, motivation is both the most important and the most difficult to measure. A former instructor at the Air Force Academy summed it up this way. He said:

> Probably the greatest undeterminable is the entering Doolie's personal motivation for a career in the Air Force. A young man admitted to the Academy has contracted to serve four years as a cadet, and,upon graduation, to serve at least five years as an officer in the United States Air Force. To believe that over a thousand youngsters entering the Academy each summer have all made dedicated commitments to a military career would be foolhardy. Such is not the maturity of youth.[14]

Although it may be foolish to believe that 1,400 new cadets can be motivated toward an Air Force career, in the opinion of this author, it is not unreasonable to believe that most of them can be motivated to graduate from the Academy before they begin that education. Whether they can be or not, it was noted that <u>all but two</u> of the forty-one graduates surveyed at the Air Command and Staff College were strongly motivated toward completing an Academy education when they accepted their appointments.[15] These men are all successful career officers today. If this small

sample is any indication of reality, then the results indicate that the measurement of motivation upon entry is a most important capability to have. In spite of this, there are many who would argue that it is not important to be motivated prior to entry.

There is a feeling among many civilians, both educators and parents, that young people inducted into the armed services or appointed to a military academy will be transformed into men of quality regardless of their life style prior to entry. As a matter of fact, many feel that if a young man is accepted into a military academy, it is <u>because</u> he was incapable of fitting into the civilian society. Lt. Colonel Albert N. Garland of the United States Army made the following observation in an article entitled "Motivate Me". He stated the following:

> It has been said hundreds of times, and quite rightly, that a military force only reflects the society from whence it springs. For some reason or other, though, many Americans--including some in the services--prefer to think otherwise. They like to believe that when a person enters service a major change somehow comes over him during basic training so that the end-product is a kind of homogenized creature, smooth and creamy, dedicated to his country and its flag, ready to lay down his life for his fellow man, unselfish, seeking only to serve. It sometimes comes as a shock to those people to discover that the soldier is neither more nor less a human being with the strengths and weaknesses of any human being; that he is still a product of that part of American society that spawned him.[16]

The Academy cadet is no different. If the American people want to be represented by an officer corps which embodies those characteristics of motivation, strong moral character, patriotism,

dedication, unselfishness, and service which they envision in a military officer, then the Air Force Academy candidate is going to have to have a desire to develop those qualities when he accepts an appointment to the institution. He must be motivated before he enters the training and he must be motivated for the right reasons.

Summary

The entrance qualifications for the Air Force Academy are designed to select from among the candidates only those young men with the greatest promise for success in the Academy program and in the United States Air Force. Although the system has been successful to date, several weaknesses exist. An almost exclusive reliance upon the academic measurement for candidate qualification is weighing the selection criteria in the wrong direction. Although the methods of measuring the degree of leadership potential and the level of motivation are imprecise, they are the most important factors to be considered in selecting cadet candidates.

Since leadership and motivation are important criteria, any decision which would lower entrance standards to maintain a sufficient number of candidates would have to be made in favor of reducing the academic minimums while maintaining high minimums for the other standards. This does not suggest that high academic

standards are unnecessary. It only suggests that while all Air Force officers are expected to have the ability to lead and to motivate, they do not all need to be academicians. A better solution would be one which provided greater numbers of qualified and motivated candidates without having to lower any standards. The focal point of this effort is the candidate counselor. The following chapter discusses the role of the candidate counselor today and provides a look into the future.

CHAPTER III

THE CANDIDATE COUNSELING PROGRAM TODAY

> The Director of Candidate Advisory Service administers the Academy Liaison Officer program to provide counseling and information to prospective candidates concerning preparation, application, and admission.[1] (Candidate Advisory Service)

Introduction

The Candidate Advisory Service is a sub-division of the Office of Admissions and Registrar at the Air Force Academy. While the Admissions Office itself is primarily concerned with selecting the best candidates from the many applicants, the Candidate Advisory Service supervises the actual personal contacts made with each candidate prior to the selection process. The vehicle by which this personal contact is made is the Academy Liaison Officer.

The following sections will describe the role of the candidate counselor in general and the Academy Liaison Officer in particular. His role will be related to the roles of those others who are now or who will soon be filling similar roles. These others include the intercollegiate coach, the Academy graduates, and certain selected active duty Air Force officers. While discussing the elements of the counseling job as it is now performed, certain

problems and inadequacies in the present program will be highlighted for consideration in later chapters.

The Role of the Liaison Officer

A liaison officer is an Air Force Reserve Officer who devotes approximately 200 hours a year to the Academy Liaison Officer program. He is a man of experience and accomplishment. He has served in the active Air Force and is most probably an educator, an executive, a professional, a business owner, or a civil servant.[2] As a liaison officer, he is considered by some as an information giver, by others as a recruiter, and still by others as a public relations man or a vocational counselor. Perhaps his mission as defined in the official Liaison Officers Manual provides everyone insight into the real complexity of his job. The Liaison Officers Manual states the following:

> The mission of the LO [liaison officer] program is to provide information and guidance to young men who seek nominations to the Academy and to make every effort to raise the quality of applicants so as to provide the Academy with the best possible candidates each year. In the course of their duties they visit secondary and junior high schools, attend college and career programs, and work closely with local Air Force Recruiting Offices and youth groups such as YMCA, CAP, Boy Scouts, and others. Occasionally they appear on radio, TV, and before civic groups to carry their message to the public. The prime responsibility, though, is directed toward the individual candidate. This responsibility covers information on high school program planning, applications for nominations, candidate processing, caution about the rugged Freshman or Fourth Class year, and post-admission contact to maintain

liaison between the cadet and his hometown, particularly with his high school and its students.[3]

To provide additional insight into the liaison officer job, some statistics from a report made by the USAF Academy Advisory Council Committee on the Liaison Officer program are interesting. This report indicated that the average liaison officer in 1970 spent 196 hours visiting some 20 schools, meeting with guidance counselors and other school officials 44 times, and interviewing 33 candidates in 44 meetings. He also spoke to 432 townspeople at various civic organization meetings.[4] The facts pointed out in these two paragraphs emphasize the diversity and the complexity of the job, especially when one considers the additional fact that the liaison officer does these things in his spare time as a volunteer. It may be safely surmised that a liaison officer would find it very difficult to adequately perform all of these functions. He must undoubtedly set priorities on his various duties in order to be successful at anything.

In setting these priorities, the determined liaison officer will probably recognize that as the Candidate Advisory Service has observed, "The actual personal counseling of candidates is, perhaps, the LO's most important job."[5] If this is the case, then the liaison officer would want to prepare himself to be an effective counselor. He may first ask himself what he is supposed to do as a counselor.

It has been said that during a personal counseling encounter the liaison officer is supposed to ". . . judge each boy as to seriousness of intent and those intangibles of character that cannot be found in statistics or tests."[6] If this observation is true, then the counseling session with a cadet candidate becomes the primary measuring tool for determining the level of motivation and the quality of the applicant's character. Since the average liaison officer visits 33 young men in 44 sessions, he is basically seeing one boy one time for perhaps 45 minutes. Even the professional counselor cannot hope to accurately judge a client's "seriousness of intent" and his character in one short interview. Therefore, one must assume that even in his "most important job" the liaison officer is greatly handicapped by lack of time, organization, and planning. In short, he cannot do the job assigned him as it is envisioned to be done.

If the most important job of the liaison officer is that of counseling cadet candidates, then his second most important job must be that of locating prospective candidates. As described in his list of responsibilities, he is expected to accomplish this task by using various publicity tools and by visiting youth groups and high schools. Since he is generally assigned an area including as many as twenty high schools, he must rely upon the high school staff for help in locating potential candidates. In fact,

"It is no overstatement to say that the most important person a Liaison Officer can know in a high school is the counselor."[7] This is the opinion of the Candidate Advisory Service and in three years of visiting high schools and talking with prospective candidates, this author has found it to be quite true. However, one cannot assume that the high school counselor knows every young man in the school who may have an interest in the Air Force Academy.

Most high school counselors admit that they are unable to know the aspirations of all their students because of their heavy counseling workload and the large student bodies in most of today's high schools.[8] Some counselors suggest that teachers and coaches may be more familiar with the aspirations and capabilities of the better students than they themselves.[9] Richard Fisher, a former high school counselor, has made the following observation concerning today's high school counselors:

> We all are cognizant of the abhorable fact that all too many guidance counselors, because of lack of time, space, information, training, or motivation, or any combination of these are prone to tell the student who excels in math and science, for example, that he should become an engineer and "send the next boy in on your way out," without investigating the potential market for engineers, the interest the student has in engineering, whether he even knows what engineering is, or for that matter, whether he really wants to go to college at all.[10]

The dedicated liaison officer must be aware of these facts and should also be ready to offer his counseling assistance to the students for whom the high school counselor has little time. These students are usually just the students with whom the liaison officer would

like to talk anyway. In this way the liaison officer may provide a beneficial service to the high school counselor.

The Candidate Advisory Service has recognized this beneficial service which is often rendered to the high school counselor by stating that "A counselor . . . will probably be interested in the unique service an [sic] LO can render his school."[11] The liaison officer has a specific qualification for counseling the select group of outstanding young men in each school with whom the high school counselor spends little time. Because of the liaison officer's background and broad experience, he is able to help high quality students look realistically at their alternatives. Those who are interested in the Air Force Academy provide him with possible future candidates while the rest have benefited from his counsel and are better prepared to provide the society with their unique services. There is only one constraint on the liaison officer in this task as in the counseling task itself and that constraint is time. This topic will be addressed in a later chapter.

While the liaison officer is busy performing seeking and counseling tasks, there are other Academy representatives working in similar areas. The intercollegiate coach is one of these.

The Intercollegiate Coach

One of the primary methods of publicizing the Air Force Academy

and its programs has been through intercollegiate athletics. Most Academy authorities have emphasized the program and have supported efforts to maintain a strong level of major college competition. In order to assure a continuing program of high quality varsity teams, the Candidate Counseling Office of the Athletic Association came into being. Coaches of all eighteen varsity sports spend a great deal of time filling a role almost identical to that just described for the liaison officer. They are looking for and interviewing the same high quality young man that the liaison officer seeks, but they are further restricted in that they are primarily interested in the outstanding athlete who also fits the other criteria.

As the coach/counselor travels from school to school he works with the same high school counselors and assists them in the same manner that the liaison officer does. Being a candidate counselor, he is truly interested in helping any outstanding young man to obtain an appointment to the Academy. One may say that this program is redundant, but when one considers the number of men who could be counseled and the time in which to counsel, the more counselors there are the better.

In spite of this, all too often the liaison officer and the coach are at odds in a local area. Present policy requires that each candidate be interviewed by a liaison officer before the selection panels meet. This means that a young man who has spent several hours of counseling with a coach must also be "counseled"

by a liaison officer who is in a hurry and is mainly interested in filling out the appropriate form. Most liaison officers know that the young man has already been well counseled and that the extra session is redundant. This redundant interviewing is not only a waste of valuable time but is many times counter-productive. On several occasions this author had an athlete who was anxious to attend the academy talked out of it by a liaison officer who did not have all of the facts about the boy. On the other hand there has been outstanding cooperation between liaison officers and coaches where hand-in-hand counseling has aided a young man in making a decision that would have been difficult if he were left alone.

Recognizing that these two counseling activities can compliment one another and that they usually do, but that because of poor coordination difficulties do arise, it seems logical that a more centralized control be established. Perhaps a central office of primary candidate counseling responsibility would provide better coordination and more thorough control of the overall counseling program. A single coordination center makes even more sense as the Association of Graduates becomes more and more involved in the counseling program.

The Association of Graduates

The Liaison Officer program was devised to fill a role similar

to that filled by the Alumni Associations at the Military Academy and the Naval Academy since the Air Force Academy had no alumni in the beginning. Through June of 1973 there have been 7,790 cadets graduate from the Air Force Academy. Although some of these graduates are now deceased, most are in localities where they have contact with the youth of the community. Many have expressed personal interest in assisting in the candidate counseling program. Many more would be interested if they were given guidance. The Academy is now in the process of formalizing a program through which the graduate would be encompassed in the candidate counseling program.

In formalizing this effort, a letter from the Superintendent of the Air Force Academy, Lt. General A. P. Clark, was sent to every graduate on 6 November 1973. The letter pointed out to the graduate that he has a unique background for talking with the candidate. The graduate can describe the challenge and frustrations of cadet life better than anyone else. The graduates are urged to establish alumni chapters in their local areas and to work with the liaison officers through the Candidate Advisory Service in providing counsel and information to potential candidates.[12] As this program builds, the numbers of Academy candidate counselors will grow so that much better use of counseling time may be made and more potential candidates can be thoroughly counseled. Although the graduate may become the counselor of the future, there is one more counselor who deserves attention now and he is the selected active duty officer.

The Active Duty Counselor

Except for the active duty Academy graduate and the intercollegiate coach who is an Air Force officer, there are very few authorized positions for candidate counselors from the active duty ranks. There exist several special programs which need only be mentioned to demonstrate that there are some active duty counselors playing a very important role in the counseling process.

Perhaps the most noteworthy is the "minorities" program which has received much support from congress and the public. Several officers work in this area and are responsible for a very effective recruiting program among minority groups. Details of this program will be discussed in a later chapter.

Another program requiring the efforts of active duty officers is the regular Air Force enlisted program which seeks to identify young airmen who have the potential to be successful Academy graduates through the Air Force Academy Prep School program. Every organization has an officer who is assigned the extra duty for the accomplishment of this task.

A new program now in test status has been called project "Top Talk". This program will require that candidates make a trip to a nearby Air Force base to be interviewed by a senior Air Force officer. The primary purpose of this program is to help identify those who

are motivated and who have the character required for an Academy education. It should be apparent however that this is merely repeating the same procedure that the coach and the liaison officer have had to endure for some years. In this program, the coach and the liaison officer have interviewed and counseled young men and have made appraisals. Now the same young man will have to endure a third interview which in an hour can get little deeper into the young man's motivation than the other counselors before. It would seem that more profit could be gained if the same counselor could spend three hours with the candidate in several interviews. The basis for this contention will be discussed in the next chapter.

SUMMARY

Today's candidate counselors are primarily Air Force Academy Liaison Officers and intercollegiate coaches. An emerging force of counselors destined to handle a large share of the future counseling task are the Academy graduates, nearly 8,000 strong. In addition to these three major participants, there are some active duty officers in specialized programs.

A pilot program now in a test status is called project "Top Talk." It will use active duty officers to interview qualified candidates in an effort to increase the reliability of the measurement of the candidate's motivation. Its utility is seriously questioned.

Other programs using active duty officers include a minorities

recruiting program and a program for providing qualified regular airmen with an opportunity to attend the Air Force Academy Prep School in preparation for Academy enrollment.

Although the role described for these counselors seems complex, it actually revolves around two primary tasks. The first is that of locating the potential candidate and the second is that of counseling that potential candidate. There are many ways of attracting and locating the potential candidate and the candidate counselor may wish to use any or all of them depending on the time he has to devote to that aspect of the job. However, of all the methods one might employ, there is one which is most effective and upon which most counselors rely heavily. That method is the art of working hand-in-hand with the high school guidance counselor.

The effective candidate counselor recognizes that he can provide the high school counselor with a unique service while the high school counselor can help identify potential cadet candidates. The high school counselor seldom has time to provide useful vocational or educational counseling to the top students. The candidate counselor can be of great assistance in this area while he seeks potential candidates. While he talks with these top students he would be well advised to take the extra time necessary to help them analyze realistically their alternatives. He has the expertise and the effort will benefit him in the end.

After the counselor has located a potential candidate his

Primary counseling task is to measure and to help develop the candidate's motivation to complete an Academy education and to determine the quality of the applicant's character. This is an impossible task if the counselor has only a few test scores and one interview upon which to base his judgment. If, in addition, he has to interview a young man who has been interviewed by other Academy counselors before him, his time is being consumed in relatively useless repitition.

Whether the candidate counselor interviews a candidate once or numerous times, his ability to judge and to help a candidate must be based upon proved concepts of counseling practice. The next chapter deals with the counseling process.

CHAPTER IV

THE COUNSELING TASK

> I think, Senator Stennis, that the most difficult thing to determine in any kind of examination or selection is a man's character and his capacity for leadership and his personality.[1] (Lt. General Hubert R. Harmon, 1954)

Introduction

As has been discussed in the preceeding chapters, the Air Force Academy Candidate Counselor, whether he is a liaison officer, an intercollegiate coach, or Academy graduate is primarily concerned with individual counseling. To be more specific, he is both an educational and a vocational counselor since he is helping a young man to make realistic choices concerning both his college education and his career goal. In this activity, whether the counselor is passing information or acting as a decision facilitator, he is dealing with the future life of a formative youth with superior talent which can be greatly beneficial to the society if developed effectively. In sum, the counseling role assumed by the Academy counselor is greatly important whether the young man he counsels chooses an Air Force Academy education or not. Since this counseling role is so important, the counselor should logically be well educated in order to be

effective in his function.

The question that naturally follows this observation is what kind of education and experience would make the candidate counselor more capable. The American Personnel & Guidance Association, the governing body of professional counselors in the United States, believes that a practicing counselor should have a minimum of a Master's degree resulting from two years of graduate work. They also recognize a counseling role which they have named the "counseling aide". The functions filled by this aide include ". . . interviewing, leading group discussions, gathering and processing information, and a number of other things." [2] They also point out that the training required for an aide may be accomplished in as little as a few weeks.

It would be unrealistic to consider an extensive education program for an Academy candidate counselor because they are counselors only as an extra duty. However, in a later chapter the idea of a realistic training program will be explored. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the fundamental counseling skills which should be learned and applied by every candidate counselor.

Basic Counseling Principles

The Bible for the liaison officer is the Liaison Officers Manual, a publication of the Candidate Advisory Service. The predominate theme of this publication is the role of the liaison officer as a

counselor. It is filled with helpful hints on effective counseling, but unfortunately is probably read hurridly two or three times by the new candidate counselor and not at all by the "experienced" ones. Even if one does read it carefully, not having been schooled in counseling terms like "restatement", "reflection," and "summary techniques," he will most likely come away from the reading with little more skill in counseling than he had before the reading. As it stands today, the candidate counselor must rely primarily on his own background and professional experience in his counseling role. This may be sufficient in some cases, but logic suggests that most candidate counselors are ill-prepared to perform this most important function as effectively as it needs to be performed.

To better prepare the candidate counselor for his counseling task an understanding of counseling principles and their application would greatly improve his ability to judge and to help the candidate. It must first be realized that the Academy candidate is a special kind of counselee and that one need not be well grounded in all of the skills of a counseling psychologist to be of great help to the candidate. With this thought in mind an investigation of the basic principles involved in successful counseling is appropriate.

Dr. Carl R. Rogers, an imminent clinical psychologist who is considered by many the father of modern guidance counseling techniques, has listed six conditions which he considers both "necessary and sufficient" to bring about "therapeutic personality change."[3] However, professional counselors have generally adopted three of

the conditions as having universal application to the counselor in any counseling situation. These conditions are: "unconditional positive regard," "congruence," and "empathic understanding." [4] To understand how each applies to the role of the candidate counselor, requires a more detailed discussion.

Dr. Rogers defines "congruence" in this manner:

> . . . a congruent, genuine, integrated person . . . means that within the [counseling] relationship he is freely and deeply himself, with his actual experience accurately represented by his awareness of himself. It is the opposite of presenting a facade. . . ."[5]

The capacity a candidate counselor has to be sincere, genuine, or congruent adds to his ability to establish an atmosphere of trust and confidence. The candidate would soon understand that he is not being "conned" but that the counselor is, in fact, the counselor and the man he is represented to be. He is sincerely interested in the candidate. He demonstrates concern for the candidate's future by his helpful discussion and consideration. He suggests alternatives which may not have occurred to the youth. He does not try to jam one alternative down the candidate's throat, but helps the candidate consider all of his alternatives factually and realistically. This is the attribute of congruence essential in all effective counselors.

The second universal condition is called "unconditional positive regard" by Dr. Rogers[6] and is called "nonpossessive warmth" by Truax and Carkhuff,[7] two other notable authorities in

the professional counseling field. The basic word which describes the concept is probably "acceptance." Rogers defines it thusly: "To the extent that the therapist finds himself experiencing a warm acceptance of each aspect of the client's experience as being a part of that client, he is experiencing unconditional positive regard."[8] The ability to accept the client as he is with no pre-judgments as to his character because of his appearance or other superficial factor is probably the most difficult task facing any counselor. Ideally, the counselor should only be interested in helping the counselee find himself without regard to outside influences or pressures, but in reality, this is an impossible task. For the candidate counselor it is even more difficult than for the full-time vocational counselor.

The Academy counselor faces the same challenge as the industrial counselor in that neither can be devoted to the counselee to the exclusion of the Air Force or the company interests. These counselors do represent the organization and are interested in furthering the objectives of the organization. The candidate counselor is obligated to judge the candidate's qualifications, character, and motivation; but he is also obligated, if he is an effective counselor, to accept the candidate as he is. If the youth perceives that the counselor does accept him as he is, he is more likely to be candid and will ultimately provide the counselor with a more accurate picture of his real potential.

To offer a real example of what might happen if a candidate counselor is not accepting in his attitude the following actual incident occurred. As a member of a candidate selection panel at the Air Force Academy, this author recalls one case where a candidate was rated outstanding by every high school staff member who sent evaluations. His academic and leadership scores were outstanding. The liaison officer who interviewed the young man rated him low. The only reason the liaison officer gave for the low rating was that the young man had been sleeping when the liaison officer arrived for the interview. Having driven 80 miles the liaison officer was unhappy at being required to wait a few minutes for the boy to make his appearance. There was no suggestion that the liaison officer had taken time to resolve his ill feeling by determining if the boy were sick, or held a night-time job, or any other reason for the boy's daytime sleeping. The report only stated that the boy was unreliable. Acquiring the talent of accepting a candidate without reservation, of giving him the benefit of the doubt until an accurate appraisal can be made, is a talent which is indispensible to the effective counselor.

The third condition accepted by counselors as universal to the profession is called "empathic understanding" by Rogers. He defines this concept by stating that "To sense the client's private world as if it were your own, but without ever losing the 'as if' quality--this is empathy. . . ."[9]

While being able to accept the candidate as he is may be the most difficult concept for the counselor to master, the ability to have real empathy for him is probably the most important. If he has the ability to consider the numerous career or educational alternatives open to the client as the client perceives them, he holds the key to the effective accomplishment of his counseling responsibility to both the candidate and the Air Force. Having the client's view in mind, the candidate counselor can clarify and expand the client's knowledge and understanding of school and career opportunities. He can provide the candidate with information which will make his direction clearer and his decision ultimately easier. To achieve this goal is certainly in the best interest of both the candidate and the Air Force.

In addition to these three principles of effective counseling, Delany and Eisenberg, contemporary professional counselors, add a fourth. They define this principle as "professional competency."[10] One would not demonstrate his professional competency by producing a diploma, but rather would produce a feeling of confidence in the counselee that the counselor is a professional. This feeling would be transmitted by both verbal and non-verbal communication through the counselor's demonstration of empathic understanding, acceptance of the counselee, and knowledge of his profession. Applying this capacity to the candidate counselor, if the potential candidate is confident that the counselor knows his

business, is providing helpful information in a professional manner, is not pushing him faster than he wants to go, then the barriers to communication will not be likely to develop and the counselor will get the job done effectively.

It is certainly well to recognize that these attributes would make better counselors, but the average candidate counselor would probably observe that he does not have enough time for all of that and that he must make do with what he has. The issue of time, then, becomes a major consideration. It is interesting to note that "time" itself is an important tool of the counselor and the candidate counselor may find that his time constraint can work to his advantage.

Using Time in the Counseling Encounter

In the past, the liaison officer has generally had only one interview with most candidates. The candidates usually have several scholarship opportunities or at least a broad span of interests. He has arrived at a point in life when he must decide on a course of action. The decision will terminate or postpone the possibility of entering into other endeavors in which he has developed an interest. Therefore, the decision is difficult. In dealing with situations like this Dr. Leona Tyler, a noted professional counselor and writer, suggests ". . . that the assimilation of new information, directly related to one's self and one's plans,

takes time."[11] As a matter of fact, she points out that this ". . . important process is the one that continues after the interview is over, for days, weeks, or even months. Thus it is usually wiser not to insist that a client accept facts that have been presented to him, but rather simply to suggest that he think about them."[12] This situation is faced time after time by the candidate counselor as he interviews young men who think they might be interested in the Air Force Academy, but who have few facts at their disposal. If the counselor presents the information and asks for a commitment in the same interview, he is violating this cardinal principle of effective counseling: that of using time to his advantage.

Since the candidate counselor has probably introduced a new possibility to the candidate and since he is interested in helping the candidate make a career decision, he must be even more conscious of the importance of considering time than just the need for the candidate to use it to assimilate facts. Dr. Tyler suggests in the following quotation that when one is helping in decision making one has an even greater responsibility to the client. She says:

> In the cases where indecision rests upon conflicts in the client himself over roles he is not sure he wishes to play, the most important factor the counselor can utilize to help him is time. This is especially true when counseling has upset the plans the person has held for some time and given him some new possibilities to consider. The trying on of new roles to see how well they fit cannot be hurried.[13]

It becomes apparent then that the candidate counselor must consider

scheduling his time so as to provide the candidate with at least two counseling sessions, properly spaced, for adequate assimilation of information and consideration of the various possibilities open to him.

While considering the importance of using time effectively in the counseling encounter, it was mentioned that one of the primary purposes of the interview, especially the initial interview, is one of providing information to the candidate. This task is another important responsibility of any counselor and must be accomplished according to certain specific guidelines if the maximum benefit is to be attained.

Providing Useful Information to the Candidate

In her book, The Work of the Counselor, Dr. Tyler cites three general characteristics of good information. These are accuracy (factual information), recency, and availability.[14] The candidate counselor is already provided with vividly factual and recent information. This information is certainly designed to avoid ". . . generalities or propoganda put out for recruiting purposes" which Dr. Tyler feels is the kind of information that should never be introduced by a counselor.[15] In the Air Force Academy environment, there is no room for introducing generalities and empty promises in an effort to entice any young man into the program. The candidate

must have as much truthful and detailed information as he can assimilate and then he must be given time to consider it carefully. Although such information is available in films like "Profile of a Doolie" and in numerous brochures, it is sometimes tempting for a candidate counselor unfamiliar with counseling techniques to withhold, embellish, or otherwise tamper with the candidate's ability to perceive the information as it was intended to be perceived. It is certainly important for the counselor to know how to structure an information-giving session.

Dr. Tyler says that "There are many ways to structure an information-giving situation, but they all have in common the practice of waiting for the client response before proceeding from one step to the next."[16] It has been this author's experience that it is extremely difficult to refrain from "running off at the mouth" while the candidate is virtually "snowed under" with masses of information. Recognizing that most counselors have a similar problem, each counselor must be sensitive to the level of understanding the candidate has reached as pieces of information are discussed (as opposed to dispensed). He must allow the candidate time to express his impression. This will afford the counselor an opportunity to gain some "empathy" and to provide the candidate with guidance for continuing an enlightening discussion. In this structure, the volume of information dispensed is not as important as the understanding gained. There are several ways

that the counselor can structure information-giving sessions.

The counselor may choose to present the information initially in a group session. This is done regularly already. Many times the parents are invited to attend with the candidate. In a group session it is important for the counselor to realize that his opportunity to become acquainted with the individual candidate is made more difficult as the number of people in the group increases. There are many varying opinions as to the optimum size of a group in a counseling situation, but perhaps Professors D.C. Dinkmeyer and J.J. Muro provide the most useful guidance in stating that, "In terms of counseling groups, however, the larger the group the greater the demands on the counselor and the necessarily decreased participation time of individual members"[17] It would seem then that it is up to the counselor to judge the purpose of the session and the background of those who will participate in order to determine how many he can effectively handle in a specific instance.

After the first session, whether it was a group or an individual session, the effective counselor will want to schedule individual sessions with each of the participants to evaluate the extent to which the information has been assimilated, the progress the candidate has made toward making a valid decision, and the depth of the commitment that may have been reached. The counselor could schedule these sessions at his own home or in some convenient place where several of the candidates could be counseled in one

evening according to a specific schedule. Few candidate counselors discipline themselves enough to limit the time of their counseling sessions so as to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Generally, 45 minutes to an hour is all one candidate can stand in a real counseling session.

To conduct this real counseling session, the counselor should have prepared previously so as to conserve time in the session. He has some information on the candidate. He may have test scores, academic grades, biographical information and the like. The knowledgeable counselor can know from this information what chance the candidate has of succeeding academically and militarily at the Academy. With this foreknowledge, the primary task of the session is to determine the level of motivation and commitment or to provide help in improving that level. If, on the other hand, he knows that the candidate would not be accepted because of low grades, physical problems, or some other factor, then it is his task to orient the counseling session to providing the facts in such a way that the candidate reaches the right conclusion. Then the counselor may feel that he can assist the young man in looking at other alternatives. In either case the second counseling session is most important to the candidate's development.

In his efforts to improve the commitment level of the qualified candidate, there are several common practices which a counselor should avoid. Dr. Tyler suggests that information

which may convey strong pressure or opinion should never be introduced to a counselee.[18] Regardless of the potential value a particular candidate may represent to the Air Force, his commitment must be inspired by factual information, not by opinion or coercion. If the candidate detects that the counselor is attempting to persuade him by introducing information designed to push for a premature commitment, the counselor may lose the respect of the candidate. To illustrate this kind of information, suppose the candidate asks if he will be able to ski as much as he likes. The counselor should advise him that freshmen have very few opportunities to ski and then only on Sundays. He may be tempted to generalize with an opinion based on fact by saying, "Oh, I'm sure that you'll get in some skiing. The Cadet Ski Club sponsors trips to the slopes every week-end." Obviously such a reply, although true in content, is misleading. Such generalizations, opinions, or coercion must be avoided in counseling.

Another factor, as detracting to commitment formulation as opinion, is advice giving. The counselor must realize that

> . . . with adolescents in school situations, what they feel they need least is another adult in their environment telling them what to do. Adolescents in school will tend to reject advice even if they ask for it, and in so doing, they will reject the advice giver as a source of help.[19]

The candidate has enough advice givers at home and elsewhere. What he really needs is a helper to assist him in making a decision

based upon factual information. This is a role the candidate counselor should be prepared to fill. The decision made may not be what the counselor had hoped for, but if he used his talents well, he can be satisfied that the decision was a valid one made after careful consideration of the alternatives. In the long run, the process will have been the most effective way to assist both the candidate and the Air Force.

Having accomplished all of the foregoing activities, one may logically ask what the counselor does if he has given the candidate ample time to assimilate the information and has provided as clearly as he knows how descriptions of the alternatives and, yet, the candidate cannot make a definite decision. This is not unusual among young people with many talents.

The Decision Facilitator

The cadet candidate is a highly capable young man with many school and career options. He has received vast amounts of advice and generally has little factual information. He is sometimes confused and finds making the final decision difficult. The counselor can assist in this situation by acting as a decision facilitator. To perform this important role, there several facts the counselor must know and there are techniques that will greatly benefit him in his work. The Liaison Officers Manual provides the liaison officer with some important behaviorial characteristics of adolescents relative to

realistic decision-making as follows:

> It has been said that a student's thoughts about vocations progress through various stages. The earliest is a fantasy stage. Later, with exploration, the individual decides on a tentative vocation and, with increasing information, becomes more realistic in his exploratory thinking. As he grows in maturity, his vocational preferences and plans become more stable, but the process is always dynamic and changing. It may be apparent, at this point, that our role is to help the prospective candidate to remove his thoughts from the fantasy stage prior to his entrance into the Academy.[20]

This brief quotation is about all the liaison officer is exposed to in the field of theoretical vocational psychology. The concepts alluded to in this quotation are actually a very small part of a vocational theory developed by E. Ginzberg and associates in 1951.[21] Another authority on the subject of vocational development, Donald E. Super built upon the earlier theoretical thinking of several writers and developed a much more comprehensive theory for career development which expands Ginzberg's theory greatly. Any vocational counselor would be enlightened by Super's thoughts.

Basically, Super observed that the process of vocational choice is based upon a person's self-concept. This self-concept moves through stages of development similar to Ginzberg's stages referred to in the above quotation.[22] If Super's developmental approach to occupational choice is accurate, then it becomes the task of the candidate counselor to provide information and experience which will speed up the candidate's growth toward the realistic (Ginzberg) or the crystallization (Super) stage of development so that motivation

and commitment can develop.

The candidate counselor can help the candidate develop a realistic level of awareness and can help him make a decision which is genuine and which results in a strong personal commitment in several ways. The steps previously discussed in the section on information-giving are certainly important to this goal. Another consideration is the role of the candidate's parents. Even though many parents insist that they let their son make his own decisions, the youth knows what they want for him or expect of him and is likely to act upon that knowledge. The results of a survey taken of 2,431 high school students in 1972 demonstrated that the vast majority of them were planning on pursuing the post-graduation activity desired for them by their parents.[23] The most important role for the counselor in this situation is to determine whether the candidate's personal commitment is as strong as his parents think it is; and if it is not, then the counselor must be ready to counsel with the parents. This author has seen many fine young men injured because of their mental torment over not pleasing their parents by failing to succeed in the Academy program . In fact, several of the suicide attempts of the last few years were inspired by just this factor. With these things in mind, it should be apparent that the influence of parents is an important factor for the candidate counselor to measure in his counseling sessions.

When the counselor has determined that the candidate's commitment

is basically his own, he must employ a counseling skill which is most difficult to acquire. According to Dr. Tyler, this skill involves gaining perceptual sensitivity. She describes it in the following manner:

> The first and most important of these [skills] is perceptual sensitivity as to whether or not a real decision has actually occurred. Another way of putting it is to say that a counselor needs to be able to distinguish between a genuine decision and a pseudo-decision. This, like so many other special skills, requires picking up small cues through which the attitude behind the words can be sensed.[24]

This concept suggests a talent which is implicit in every successful counseling encounter. This is the talent of listening. Many aspiring counselors, especially untrained counselors, do not realize the benefits accruing from <u>real</u> listening. The old adage encouraging one to listen, then think, and then act, is most applicable to the counselor. Listening with both eyes as well as with both ears is implicit in good listening. Being an executive, a professional man, an educator, or a coach, the average candidate counselor may be so accustomed to telling that his ability to listen may need revitalization.

A final skill which must be employed by the counselor in aiding decisions is that of judging the quality of the decision. Having looked at the facts, interviewed the candidate and his parents, listened carefully to the spoken and non-spoken feelings, and compared these observations with selection criteria, the counselor

must decide how sincere the young man is in his decision, whether that sincerity can be improved, and what steps could be taken to improve it. This is the essence of motivation. This is the counselor's ultimate task: to judge the level of motivation and to improve it if possible. He accomplishes this task by employing the skills and techniques that have been discussed in this chapter.

Summary

In this chapter, methods for improving the role of the Air Force Academy candidate counselor have been discussed. Presently, although the counselor is assigned a counseling task, he is inexperienced and untrained as a counselor. He could benefit greatly from a training program designed to acquaint him with the attributes and techniques of a professional counselor.

The professional counselor is skilled in helping people make realistic choices. Academy counselors, like so many untrained adults, may not have this ability. These talents include personal attributes known in the counseling field as unconditional positive regard, congruence, empathy, and effective listening. In addition to having developed these attributes through training, the professional counselor is skilled in the effective use of time, the appropriate use of information, and the art of decision facilitating.

If the Academy candidate counselor were to develop these characteristics, he would contribute much more effectively to the

goal of selecting young men for the Academy who are strongly motivated and who have the capacity for leadership desired by the Air Force. He would be a counselor not in name only, but by profession.

As a professional counselor for the Air Force Academy, the candidate counselor may still fail to provide the Academy with the number of qualified candidates it needs. In fact, it is conceivable that in this professional role he would even lower the number of qualified candidates by more effectively identifying those who are not sufficiently motivated to qualify. The following chapter is a discussion of possible methods for creating quality candidates by developing <u>real</u> motivation and commitment through an active recruiting program.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPING MOTIVATION AND COMMITMENT

> A large measure of Academy success is due to the high quality of the young man admitted. Recruitment for scholars and leaders is not a sin.[1] (Representative Burt L. Talcott, California)

Introduction

In 1958, only three years after the first cadet class entered the Academy, a challenging problem was identified. The Liaison Officers Manual describes this problem as follows:

> The Liaison Officer program came into being as the result of a bubble that burst. The bubble was the widely entertained and shiny illusion as the Academy was getting started that from the moment it opened a legion of young men would be pounding on the gates for admission.[2]

When it was determined that there were not legions of young men at the gate, but rather that ". . . the Academy might find itself forced to accept every candidate who met minimum qualifications and still have difficulty filling an entering class,"[3] the Liaison Officer program was instituted.

Today, the number of qualified candidates is again diminishing, and many of those who are qualified are not motivated or committed to an Academy education. The activity of the liaison officer has postponed the problem of too few candidates for sixteen years, but

new forces have appeared to compound the problem.

The new forces that are bringing about today's shortage are many, but only a few need be identified here. The elimination of the draft has reduced the pressure which motivated many young men to seek an Academy education in the past. A poor military image as a result of the Vietnam conflict has its influence as well. Greater stress in the high school vocational and business education is reducing the number of students interested in college education. As a result there is greater competition among institutions of higher learning for those who are still inclined to continue their education. The emphasis being placed on high school job preparation today is indicated by Wilma M. Toler in her article, "Recruiting Business Majors." She makes this observation:

> Since it is predicted that fewer than 20% of all job opportunities during the next decade will require a college education, it becomes increasingly important to provide high school students with job training for the future.[4]

The effect of this vocational emphasis upon the Academy and similar institutions is that today's impatient youth are prone to accept the chance to go into a relatively high paying job right out of high school so that they can "get on with their life." Many of these young people are quite capable of much greater service to society through continued education, but as was discussed in chapter three, they are not properly counseled. They are not made aware of their alternatives and thereby are unable to make

informed choices.

In the preceeding chapter, the attributes and techniques for increasing the capability of the Academy candidate counselor to identify the qualified and motivated candidate were discussed. In this chapter, the feasibility of inducing motivation and commitment in a qualified candidate will be explored. The concept of recruiting and its application to the Academy selection process will be discussed followed by a consideration of the techniques which may be employed to insure a positive and successful recruiting program.

The Recruiting Concept

It would probably not be inaccurate to suggest that nearly every organization with a need to add to its numbers practices some form of recruiting. Unfortunately, the word has acquired a connotation which includes such ideas as pressure, half truth, generality, subornation, etc., when in the true sense of the word, it means merely to acquire, to raise, or to enlist.[5] The Academy has always incorporated a passive recruitment program through publicity and sports, but it has officially steered away from an active program because of the negative connotation of the term and because of the feeling that one who is recruited is not committed.

There are grounds for such a belief if one feels that a person

who was recruited was obtained through devious means. If, however, the person was sought out and sold on the program in a positive sense such that he was allowed to choose from an expanded list of alternatives, then his commitment should be as strong as that of the young man who has always wanted to attend the Academy.

When one considers these opposing viewpoints, one must recognize that the concept of recruitment is itself sterile. Its success or failure is dependent upon the methods used in conducting the recruiting. If a positive approach to active recruiting can be accepted by Academy authorities, then another dimension to a successful candidate counseling program will be opened.

The idea of recruiting is certainly not new at the Academy. There have been many statements supporting the idea from the Academy's inception to the present. A representative quotation was made by Lt. General Thomas S. Moorman when he observed that "It is the responsibility of the Director of Admissions and Registrar to recruit the high caliber candidates the Academy is desirous of training" (Author's italics).[6] Today, the practice of recruiting candidates is discouraged. Even efforts by the Athletic Department are looked upon with disfavor by some members of the Academy staff. Perhaps a brief look at some of the successful Academy recruiting programs would demonstrate how positive recruiting

can produce motivated cadets.

Recruiting at the Academy

Although figures are not available, this author, having worked in the athletic recruiting program for three years, is familiar with the success of that program. Each year, the coaches of eighteen varsity sports aid a large number of candidates in making decisions toward an Academy education. Last year approximately 250 new cadets were listed as athletic "recruits". The Office of Admissions recognizes the quality of the candidate brought into the system by the coaches and provides strong support for the program. These candidates are athletes who have been leaders in their high schools and who are generally well qualified academically.

Because these recruits are normally exceptional leaders, some who are minimally qualified academically are accepted into the Academy. Many of these have been highly successful and have earned important leadership positions in the Cadet Wing. Having sat as a member of an academic committee which considers the disposition of marginal and failing cadets, this author has seen cadets with surprisingly high academic aptitude being dismissed because of academic failure, while many with marginal aptitude have displayed the tenacity and the desire hoped for in the Air Force officer by struggling to maintain a passing grade and by continually

succeeding. Many of these were recruited athletes.

If one were able to compare the attrition figures for the athletic recruit with those of the entire Cadet Wing, one would undoubtedly find that the attrition would be significantly smaller among the recruits. If one were to compare the percentage of athletes who are honored militarily by being placed on the Commandant's List, or academically by being placed on the Dean's List, one would find that the percentage agrees closely with the overall percentage for the entire Cadet Wing. The evidence would show that a positive recruiting program such as that conducted by the Athletic Association is successful in bringing young men to the Academy who are leaders with high academic qualifications and who are committed to graduate from the Academy.

Another example of a successful recruiting program is one which is supervised by the Director of Admissions and which receives great support from the Academy staff. This is a recruiting program among the minority groups of America. Recruiting is a necessity in this area, as it is in athletics, because there is an extremely high demand from schools throughout the country for the outstanding individuals among the minority groups. Captain William E. Wade, the director of minority recruiting, agrees that he has to sell the Academy to minority students.[7] This is recruiting. The recruits have been very successful at the Academy. This is impressive not only from the

standpoint of the recruiting effort, but also from the standpoint of their academic qualification.

Many of these recruits come from disadvantaged families and poor school systems. Although they have the potential to develop, their environment has prevented that development through high school. The recruiter must identify young men who have the ability to excel but who may not have had the opportunity to demonstrate it. This recruiter has benefited the Academy and the Air Force by having aided quality young men in developing the commitment and the motivation to succeed in the Academy environment.

A third recruiting program, much less centralized than the preceeding two, brings qualified young men to the Air Force Academy Prep School for training which will assist them in preparing for an Academy education. Those who attend the Prep School are largely recruits from the regular Air Force or from minority groups. This author was responsible for supervising the Regular Air Force program at a Major Command level in 1969. Basically, it is the responsibility of each supervisor to identify promising young airmen and to begin a program of educating those airmen on the opportunities of becoming a career officer through the Prep School program. The success of the Prep School program, and, therefore, the recruiting program can be measured by the number of outstanding cadets who are graduated from the Academy each year who began their education at the Prep School.

Considering that the evidence presented in this section is primarily based upon this author's experience, he can only suggest that those who find the concepts suspect, investigate the facts for themselves. When one has concluded that positive recruiting does work, and that the number of qualified and motivated candidates could be increased by its application, one would then wish to examine the techniques which make up the practice of positive recruiting..

Positive Recruiting

The recruiter in this chapter is the same person who was the counselor in the last chapter. He is the liaison officer, the intercollegiate coach, the graduate, and the active duty officer. He is a counselor and a recruiter together. This is not a difficult concept to accept when one recognizes that the two responsibilities are almost synonymous. The techniques for the effective use of time in the counseling encounter, for providing factual and current information, and for helping the candidate to make his own decisions are valuable recruiting tools as well as counseling tools. Just as the counselor avoids generalizations, opinions, and advice, so does the effective recruiter. He also avoids high pressure and will make no promises that he cannot garantee.

In using these techniques, the recruiter must remain constantly aware that his purpose is not to force a change in the candidate's

values, but, rather, to help him see his opportunities clearly. The wise recruiter will assure that no alternatives are intentionally left out of the candidate's consideration and that all the facts pertaining to the choice at hand are presented and clearly understood. When the final decision is made, the candidate must perceive the decision as totally his, if he is to construct a valid commitment.

As was discussed in the preceeding chapter, the decision-making process is difficult, especially for the caliber of young man usually considering an Academy education. It is the task of the recruiter-counselor to determine the validity of the decision by weighing the level of commitment. According to Dr. Leona Tyler, there is no other criterion for measurement of a decision. She says:

> This single criterion of the soundness of a decision --that the person commit himself to it and take its consequences--may not be entirely satisfactory logically, but it seems to work fairly well in the practical situation with which counseling deals.[8]

Since the counselor-candidate relationship is certainly practical and since the real goal of the entire recruiting-counseling concept is to secure quality young men with strong commitments, the goal of the Academy counselor must be to assure a valid decision whether he is counseling a highly motivated candidate or recruiting a highly qualified individual. His challenge, then, is to apply the keys of successful counseling and positive recruiting.

Keys to Successful Recruiting

The goal of the candidate counselor is to assure a valid decision by establishing real commitment. His first key must be to realize that he cannot make something out of nothing. Regardless of the capabilities or the potential a young man may have for success in the Air Force, if he is set on something else or if he has no interest in the military, the counselor will waste any time he spends with the young man after the first contact.

Although there are many young men who are not at all interested, there are many more who are interested or who would be interested if they were exposed to the idea of attending the Academy. These are they to whom the good recruiter gravitates. He locates them in a number of ways, but the vast majority of those ways are results of the effective use of the second key. That key is publicity. There are many forms of publicity available to the recruiter. He should be familiar with them and use them effectively.

The Candidate Advisory Service has a vast selection of material available which may be used in various ways to publicize the Academy program. In addition to these methods, attendance at and participation in high school career days is a must for the effective recruiter. The intercollegiate athletic program is effective in making young people and parents aware of the Academy and its purposes. The recruiter can make use of Boy's State and

Boy's Nation programs as well as Scouting and similar programs. There are many opportunities for publicity which may attract the interest of the high quality young man.

The relationship established with the high school guidance counselor is tremendously important in this publicity program. The details of this relationship are discussed in chapter three and are an integral part of a positive recruiting program. In furthering the interest and the knowledge of the high school counselor, the liaison officer may make effective use of the educator airlift which is an on-going program at the Academy. All of these and many more methods can be used to engage the interest of a young man.

When a young man's interest is kindled, no matter how slightly, the third key to successful recruiting is employed. That key is personal contact. People are flattered by personal contact. The recruiter need not commit himself to anything until he has the information necessary to aid him in deciding whether or not the youth has potential. When this potential has been determined, then the counselor begins his counseling and recruiting task.

The fourth key to effective recruiting is perhaps a part of the counseling process, but it is more specifically the commitment-building process described previously. The positive recruiter employs all of the tools of the effective counselor and demonstrates all of the attributes attendant thereto. He listens, he empathizes,

he accepts the candidate, he provides information and guidance, and he assists the candidate toward making a realistic decision. As the recruiter is accomplishing these tasks, there are certain other tools available to him.

These tools may be included in a fifth key to effective recruiting which is follow-up. Of the numerous follow-up activities which may be used, these are a few examples:

----In communities near an Air Force installation, a recruiter would be remiss if he did not know several enthusiastic and knowledgeable young officers who would take a few hours to expose a promising youth to a cross section of Air Force life.

---- A trip to the Academy with his parents would provide a youth with an excellent opportunity to develop motivation. The recruiter could assist by arranging contacts for the family at the Academy.

----The "Grassroots" program now being used by the liaison officers is an excellent opportunity for the candidate to be exposed to and motivated by cadets from his own hometown.

There is one final key to effective recruiting that the candidate counselor must consider. As a manager of his time and his schedule, he would be well advised to apply the management principle known as span of control. Since the recruiter's time is relatively constant, the number of counseling sessions that he can conduct is also relatively constant. If he is to assure that each of his candidates is motivated to graduate from the Academy

and is committed to that course regardless of the consequences, the number of candidates with whom he will work must be small. Even though the counselor may have sessions with a large number of young men, he would be more useful to the Academy if he were able to select three or four young men with whom to work on a continuing basis. The important factor is that real recruiting or counseling cannot be accomplished in only one or two simple interviews. These goals must be accomplished in real counseling sessions and there must be time available for a real decision-making process. If each candidate counselor actually produced two highly qualified candidates each year, there would no longer be a problem with too few qualified candidates and neither would there be an attrition problem due to insufficient motivation in a candidate.

Summary

It should be apparent that recruiting is not of itself an unhealthy practice. In fact, it is a necessity in a school such as the Air Force Academy. Such schools are in fierce competition for the best of America's youth. The important factor in effective recruiting is to recruit in such a way as to produce motivation and personal commitment. The methods for accomplishing this goal are not new to the Academy. They have been practiced in organized programs by both the Office of Admissions and by the Department of Athletics.

The tools of the effective recruiter are basically those of the effective counselor described in the preceeding chapter. By using a truthful, positive approach, the recruiter can successfully assist the candidate to a valid decision and genuine commitment. This positive approach is guided by several keys to success. The expedient use of publicity will provide the recruiter with interested contacts. Personal contact and sincere interest will become the foundations upon which an effective counseling relationship may be built. Follow-up is important. Many opportunities are available for providing additional information and experience for increasing motivation. Finally, restricting the number of candidates one works with is essential to the development of quality candidates.

By using these simple guidelines, the candidate counselor can successfully locate quality candidates, furnish them with the means to make realistic career decisions, and guide them to a strong level of commitment. In doing these things he has combined the talents of an effective counselor with those of a successful recruiter. In the following chapter, a program will be outlined whereby the Academy candidate counselors may receive instruction in the techniques which will make the Academy selection process a successful and on-going program.

CHAPTER VI

A CANDIDATE COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAM

> The motivational equipment [of the candidate] is best determined by personal interview. Normally, the LO is the one to conduct these interviews. It is his responsibility to develop and use the techniques of interviewing.[1] (Candidate Advisory Service)

Introduction

Having discussed the various techniques and attributes of effective counseling and recruiting, a means whereby these skills may be acquired is necessary. It is not enough to leave the development of these techniques to the individual counselor as the above quotation suggests. The counselor needs to learn these skills, not just read about them.

Perhaps it would be well to recall that learning is accomplished better under some conditions than others. For example, reading will facilitate learning better if it is reinforced with other stimuli like movies, photographs, discussion, etc.. Lecturing without the use of visual aids is not as effective as lecturing with them. It is generally believed that when a student actively participates in a learning activity he is much more likely to retain the information and will also be more likely to improve his personal skills. Athletic teams practice, toddlers struggle from chair to chair, and pilots

learn to fly by flying. All of these activities are supervised by instructors who guide their students in their learning activity.

Today, the Air Force as well as most other big organizations in the United States use on-the-job training as a practical method of learning. When this is not possible, most educators now rely on simulation methods like case studies and role-playing techniques. Managers use management games. Military schools use war games. All of these techniques are used to encourage real learning. The candidate counselor cannot be expected to ". . . develop and use the techniques of interviewing"[2] as effectively by himself as he could with organized instruction. If he is to be taught the counseling and recruiting skills which would be most useful to him in his work, then a structure must be designed from which this learning may be achieved.

In this chapter a realistic training program will be discussed and outlined. It is evident that such a program is necessary if the goals of the Academy Admissions program are to be met in the future.

Is a Training Program Feasible?

As has been mentioned earlier, the Liaison Officers Manual is designed to provide the liaison officer with guidance in counseling and recruiting concepts and techniques. However, if this is his only exposure to the attitudes and skills necessary to the task, the likelihood of his ever really learning to apply these skills is slim.

The most logical approach to this problem is to design a training program which would provide the counselor with the opportunity to learn the skills required. This seems simple enough, but there appear to be several barriers which must first be considered.

The greatest barrier to the usefulness of an actual candidate counselor training program is that of time. Whether the counselor is a liaison officer, a coach, or a graduate, his time is limited. There are some possibilities however.

Each liaison officer serves periodic active duty tours at the Academy to bring him up to date on the Academy programs and activities. A counseling training program should be important enough to be instituted into the program of this training week. For the new liaison officers, the rewards would far outweigh the loss or rescheduling of activities now included in the training week. For the old liaison officer, a refresher would be profitable. In fact, the older counselors would be more likely to recognize the value of such a program as they reflect on the difficulties that they have had in determining real commitment. The liaison officer active duty tour is not the only training opportunity though.

In addition to the active duty tour, there are other opportunities for training during the year. The Liaison Officer Coordinator in each district holds periodic meetings with his liaison officers. These meetings could include portions of the training program each time, and the program could be expanded to deal with specific

regional problems as necessary. Active duty Air Force officers working in the counseling program could be included in these district activities as well as in the Academy training program described above.

In order to provide training for a larger number of counselors a program could be designed around a Candidate Advisory Service representative in week-end seminars. These could be held in regional Air Force base facilities or in conjunction with Graduate Association Chapter activities. With some creative imagination and a recognition of the real need for a viable training program, time would not really be a barrier to counselor education.

Another barrier which may be mentioned is that of developing the training itself. The Office of Admissions and Registrar has as another of its subdivisions, the Office of Cadet Counseling. This office employs professional counselors who would certainly possess the expertise to develop a program of this type. These counselors have already helped in many areas such as in the preparation of the Liaison Officers Manual. There is no question that this office has the expertise to develop a survey course which would provide the candidate counselor with a solid foundation in the basics of effective counseling. With that portion of the training well in hand, the technical training in positive recruiting must be considered as well.

Another office under the Director of Admissions is the Office of Minority Affairs. This office has developed many effective recruiting techniques and has achieved great success. The Candidate Counseling office of the Department of Athletics is another office which works closely with the Office of Admissions. This office has also demonstrated success in positive and active recruiting. Both offices have the expertise to assist the Office of Admissions in the development of a valuable training program.

Other barriers such as individual bias toward such a program, monetary constraints, and congressional coordination need not be discussed thoroughly because they can be worked out if such a training program were actually approved. Assuming then that the barriers were all broken down, a short but constructive program must be developed. This author suggests here a possible outline which would include the essential elements of both the counseling and recruiting skills discussed in previous chapters.

A Program outline

This program is designed for approximately ten hours. It could be conducted for two hours a day during the liaison officer's active duty tour, or it could be given in a week-end seminar. The presentation would be built around visual aids, class participation, short film strips, short lectures, and counseling simulation techniques such as case studies taken from real candidate

counseling encounters. The goal is to put the counselor in the middle of his counseling role so that he may learn the best techniques and perhaps experience why his past techniques may have been unproductive.

A five day training program using two or more hours a day could be broken down as the following outline suggests:

Day One: Effective use of time:

1. Scheduling interviews, school visits, high school counselor discussions, etc..

2. Discuss the value of using time for effective counseling.
   a. Time is required to assimulate information.
   b. Time is required in sorting out personal goals and values.
   c. Time is required to make realistic decisions and commitments.

Day Two: The importance of factual information and publicity in the counseling and recruiting role.

1. Discuss the need for factual and timely information versus opinion, advice, generalities, etc..

2. Acquaint counselors with the information and publicity material that is available for their use.
   a. Brochures, movies, grassroots program etc..
   b. Educator Airlift, personal appearances, candidate exposure to actual Air Force life, etc..

Day Three: Basic counseling concepts:

1. Acceptance of the individual.

2. Personal sincerety or congruence.

3. Developing empathy or empathic understanding.

4. Becoming a professional.

5. Developing the art of listening.

6. Measuring and improving the quality of the decision, the leadership potential, and the level of real commitment.

Day Four: Structuring the counseling/recruiting session.

1. Group counseling techniques.

2. Individual counseling sessions.

3. Keys to effective recruiting.

Day Five: Role-playing, case studies, and summary.

Summary

To compete in the arena of trained counselors and recruiters today, the Air Force Academy candidate counselor must be more effectively trained. Although a major program of counselor training is not feasible, nor perhaps even advisable, the candidate counselor needs to be better able to assist the qualified candidate toward a realistic and motivated decision and to determine the level of motivation actually attained. A program such as that outlined in this chapter would contribute toward the achievement of this goal. The most important consideration is that within a relatively few hours, the effectiveness of today's candidate counselors could be sharpened considerably and more highly qualified and motivated candidates could be obtained.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> . . . the board recommended, "That the Academy continue its study of the attrition problem, specifically that candidate selection procedures assure that adequate attention be paid to the motivation of a candidate wanting to attend the Academy. . . .[1]
> (The 1973 USAF Academy Board of Visitors)

The attention of those responsible for the Air Force Academy program has recently been held by the large number of cadets who are leaving the Academy each year. As is exemplified in the above quotation from the recommendations of the 1973 USAF Academy Board of Visitors, a major factor in this high attrition is an apparent lack of motivation among the new cadets just entering the Academy each year. An additional factor, not widely recognized, is that the number of qualified applicants has diminished to a point where the Academy may soon be forced to offer every one of the qualified candidates an appointment in order to maintain the required class size. In this case as in the former, motivation is the key factor. One is forced to conclude, then, that the primary problem facing the USAF Academy Director of Admissions is that of admitting qualified candidates who are strongly motivated toward completing an Academy education.

An important contingent problem is that of locating a larger number of motivated and qualified candidates. If these things are true, then it is important to understand what a qualified candidate is and why the minimum qualifications are set where they are.

The United States and its citizens expect the Air Force Academy to produce Air Force officers with exceptional qualities of leadership, integrity, honor, patriotism, and with the motivation to serve the people of the United States as dedicated career officers. To graduate this quality individual, it is necessary to begin the education process with the best young men who can be found. The "best" young men are those who have outstanding academic aptitude and have developed it in high school, those who have demonstrated leadership potential, those with excellent health, those with high moral and ideological standards, and those who are strongly motivated toward an Air Force career. Since few high school graduates have reached the level of vocational development to know what they want to do for a career, it is more realistic to consider those young men who are motivated to complete an Academy education with the belief that that education in itself will motivate toward an Air Force career.

Finding young men who possess all of these fine attributes is not difficult until one begins to consider motivation and commitment. Young men who have high academic aptitudes and leadership

potential are in great demand throughout the country, and, therefore, have many career options open to them. Being young, they often find it difficult to develop a strong commitment toward any single goal without help.

Since the young man eligible for an Academy education usually has several attractive educational options available to him, he must be provided with realistic and comprehensive information and qualified help in order for him to make a confident choice. Although nearly every high school has a counseling and guidance office, and although the Academy and many other institutions have counseling and information programs, young men are still not receiving the kind of counseling that is required to assure realistic decisions. Therefore, the Academy candidate counseling program needs to develop a better approach to providing the candidate with effective counseling, useful information, and help in commitment formulation. However, improved counseling will not of itself provide a sufficient solution.

In order to provide both motivated candidates and a sufficient number to satisfy the Academy requirement, an active recruiting program must be developed along with a more effective counseling program. Recruiting is an essential part of today's environment because there exists a great demand for a limited and valuable resource: the quality young American. The Academy has not

recently supported an active recruiting program on the grounds that a recruited candidate will not have the motivation required for real commitment. This hypothesis is false if the recruiting is done in a positive manner. A positive process entails knowledge in the use of a productive Academy counselor-high school counselor relationship, the use of effective counseling techniques, the absence of pressure, the understanding of the influence of environment and background on an individual's aspirations, and other principles. The development of an active and positive recruiting program can occur and is necessary if the present candidate qualifications are to be maintained.

There are those who feel that these candidate qualifications are too high and that the major criteria for entrance to the Academy should be motivation. They feel that it is not necessary or even desirable to require a candidate to have a superior academic aptitude. Many believe that those who excel academically will tend to resign more quickly than those who are not so well gifted. It has been shown, however, that there is no correlation between those who resign from the Academy or from the Air Force and their level of academic capability. Therefore, the Academy is justified in attempting to maintain an academic program which will produce outstanding graduates and to admit candidates who are challenged by the curriculum.

Even though a challenging academic education will improve the

overall quality of the graduate, those who seek to lower academic standards are correct in observing that the purpose of the Academy experience is to provide leaders and motivated career officers who can cope with the challenges of tomorrow's Air Force. A broad academic background is desirable and a college education is probably necessary in today's Air Force officer corps, but since there are many levels of education required, it seems illogical to assume that every Academy graduate needs the level of education now required of him.

The real reason for high academic capability on entrance seems to be the fact that academic attainment and aptitude are both easily measured. As a result the Academy has, perhaps unconsciously, begun to measure the quality of the graduate and the candidate by his academic score with very little real regard for the more subjectively measured qualities of leadership and motivation.

The leadership potential of an individual, his motivation and his value system are difficult parameters to measure. The selection criteria for leadership potential are based on subjective scores and evaluations which are designed to provide as accurately as possible a representation of the candidate's potential. The evaluations are made by the candidate counselor who is presently relatively unqualified to make a professional judgement. However, this evaluation is certainly more useful than many of the form questions asked of the applicant. In any case, these standards

are those upon which the emphasis must be directed in selecting cadets, even though it is easier to evaluate academic potential.

The most effective means of measuring motivation and commitment is through personal counseling. The counselors for the Air Force Academy have been the liaison officers and the intercollegiate coaches. At the present time, more emphasis is being placed on the addition of the graduate as a counselor; and in the near future, the graduate may be the predominant candidate counselor. Although these men are considered to be counselors, they have had no special training which would qualify them for the job. They have been provided with some guidance through experience and via reading materials such as that provided in the Liaison Officers Guide, but they are largely without counseling education. They have been told to judge a candidate's commitment, but they have not been taught how one might do that difficult job. They have been told to find qualified candidates, but they have not been taught the most effective methods. They have been provided with masses of information to pass to the candidate, but they have not been shown how to present it most productively. They are volunteers and they are professional men. They have done a commendable job and have applied the guidance that has been provided them. However, with the ever increasing competition among institutions of higher learning for the best high school graduates, with high school vocational training drawing many

potential college students into the work force, and with an all-volunteer force lessening the pressure on youths to enter the military, the counselor of today must be armed with all of the skill that he can have. This type of skill can only be attained through training.

The Academy candidate counselor must be provided with a training program structured to provide him with actual training and experience in effective and positive counseling and recruiting techniques. The trainee would become familiar with the personal attributes necessary to the truly effective counselor. He would learn techniques which are necessary to effectively use his time, the information available to him, to recruit positively, and to develop in the candidate a realistic approach to decision-making and commitment formulation. He would learn techniques which would enable him to judge more accurately the real commitment level of a candidate. These attributes and techniques cannot be learned by simply reading about them in a book. They must be studied, practiced, and used.

Such a training program would be supervised by the Director of Admissions and Registrar at the Air Force Academy, and would be controlled and developed by the Candidate Advisory Service and the Cadet Counseling Office. The training program could be offered during the liaison officer active duty tours at the Academy and in district areas at specified intervals. Coaches

could take part in the training during the summer and graduates working in the selection program could participate in regional sessions. Through a training program such as this and follow-on discussions in the form of articles in the Candidate Advisory Service Newsletter, the Graduate Newsletter, etc., the capability of the Academy candidate counselors could be upgraded so that their recommendations about the quality of a candidate would be a major determinant in the deliberation of the selection panels. This reliance on the counselor's opinion would be a result of his ability to accurately do the job that he has been tasked to do for fifteen years.

In addition to improving the quality of the candidate, the program would provide a means for increasing the number of qualified candidates so that the Academy could have a greater opportunity to select the most highly qualified and the most highly motivated. Increasing the numbers can only be achieved by teaching the counselor to be an effective recruiter.

When the Academy representative has learned to be a professional counselor and recruiter the problems of poor candidate motivation and cadet retention may be solved. When a candidate is accepted who is motivated and committed to complete an Academy education it then becomes the responsibility of the Academy itself to refine the cadet and to increase his motivation and commitment toward an Air Force career.

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